

Pittsburgh Ballet sheds 'Light' on Holocaust.

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The dancers in Pittsburgh Ballet Theater's newest performance don't want people to forget the horrible tragedy of the Holocaust.

[enlarge](#)
 (/sites/default/files/imagecache/Large/images/Light_0.jpg) "Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project"
 Pittsburgh Ballet Theater and many partners
 Oct. 12 through Nov. 12
 The Ballet will be held at
 Byham Theater, other events
 will be held all over Pittsburgh
 Tickets :
 \$12 students, \$17 faculty/staff through Pitt Arts for the ballet

Partnering pirouettes and pliés with the historical background of the Holocaust, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre created a month-long series of events titled, "Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project," to make sure that this infamous time in history is never forgotten.

By looking back at the Holocaust, Stephen Mills, the artistic director of Ballet Austin, hopes that people will "apply it ... and draw something out of it that is relevant to today."

The goal of the project is to educate people about this historic period, during which almost 6 million Jews and 11 million people in total perished, and to apply the lessons learned from it to issues that are relevant in today's society.

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre partnered with numerous groups and organizations to create educational programs for people of all ages. The list of PBT partners, which is the most extensive ever assembled, includes the Carnegie Library, Carnegie Mellon, Chatham University, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, the Pittsburgh Jewish Israeli Film Festival and Pitt.

Projects range from opera to dance, as well as lectures, art exhibitions and film screenings.

The project kicked off on Oct. 8, with a special reception for the opening of Henry Koerner's "Pittsburgh," an art retrospective that pays homage to his family, who perished in the Holocaust, as well as material done during his time as artist in residence at Chatham University.

Concluding the project is a full-length ballet titled, "Light," portraying a survivor's journey through the Holocaust. Mills choreographed the ballet "as his personal reaction to the inhumanity of the Holocaust, developing the idea for the ballet as a result of the Sept. 11 tragedy."

"'Light' explores the themes of the importance of family, forced imprisonment, marginalization and discrimination, experiences in the ghettos, deportation to the camps and survival, as it follows the experience of one Holocaust survivor. The contemporary choreography is stark, athletic and raw. Pittsburgh will be the first city to replicate this artistic work," according to the Holocaust Center of the United Jewish Federation's website.

The Holocaust Center of the United Jewish Federation will conduct seminars, including "The Use of Comic Books in Teaching the Holocaust" and "Cinema Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood."

These lectures will be held at the Jewish Community Center and Pitt.

The Agency of Jewish Learning will also present "Poland Personally," which is a collection of personal artifacts buried by Holocaust victims.

The Chatham University Art Gallery will mount an exhibition of Henry Koerner's "Pittsburgh," an art retrospective, which is curated by his son, Joseph. Henry migrated to Pittsburgh after losing his family in the Holocaust. He taught at Chatham and painted his view of the post-Holocaust world.

The Opera Theater of Pittsburgh will perform Maurice Sendak and Tony Kushner's Brundibar, which was "performed 55 times by children in the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt, located in Czechoslovakia," according to its website.

Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic will present works by European Jewish composers, whose work was banned by the Nazis.

"If art is relevant in the world, we have to prove it," Mills said. "Hate is a vicious cycle. Only with tolerance can peace come."

Share this experience of joy and sorrow and the resilience of the human spirit with a friend or family member. It will be forever remembered.

Tickets to the ballet can be purchased through Pitt Arts in the Union. Tickets are \$12 for students and \$17 for faculty.

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